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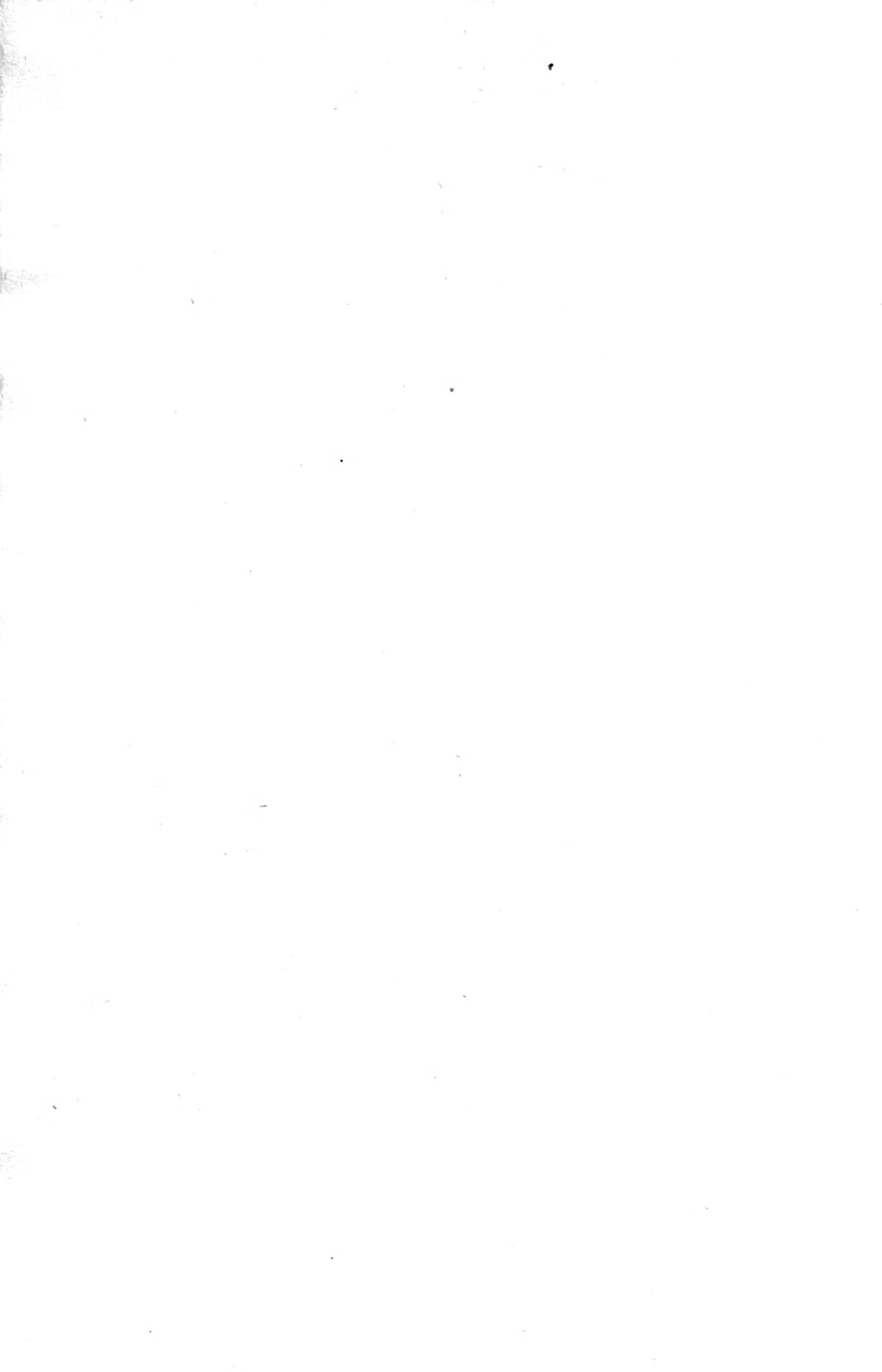
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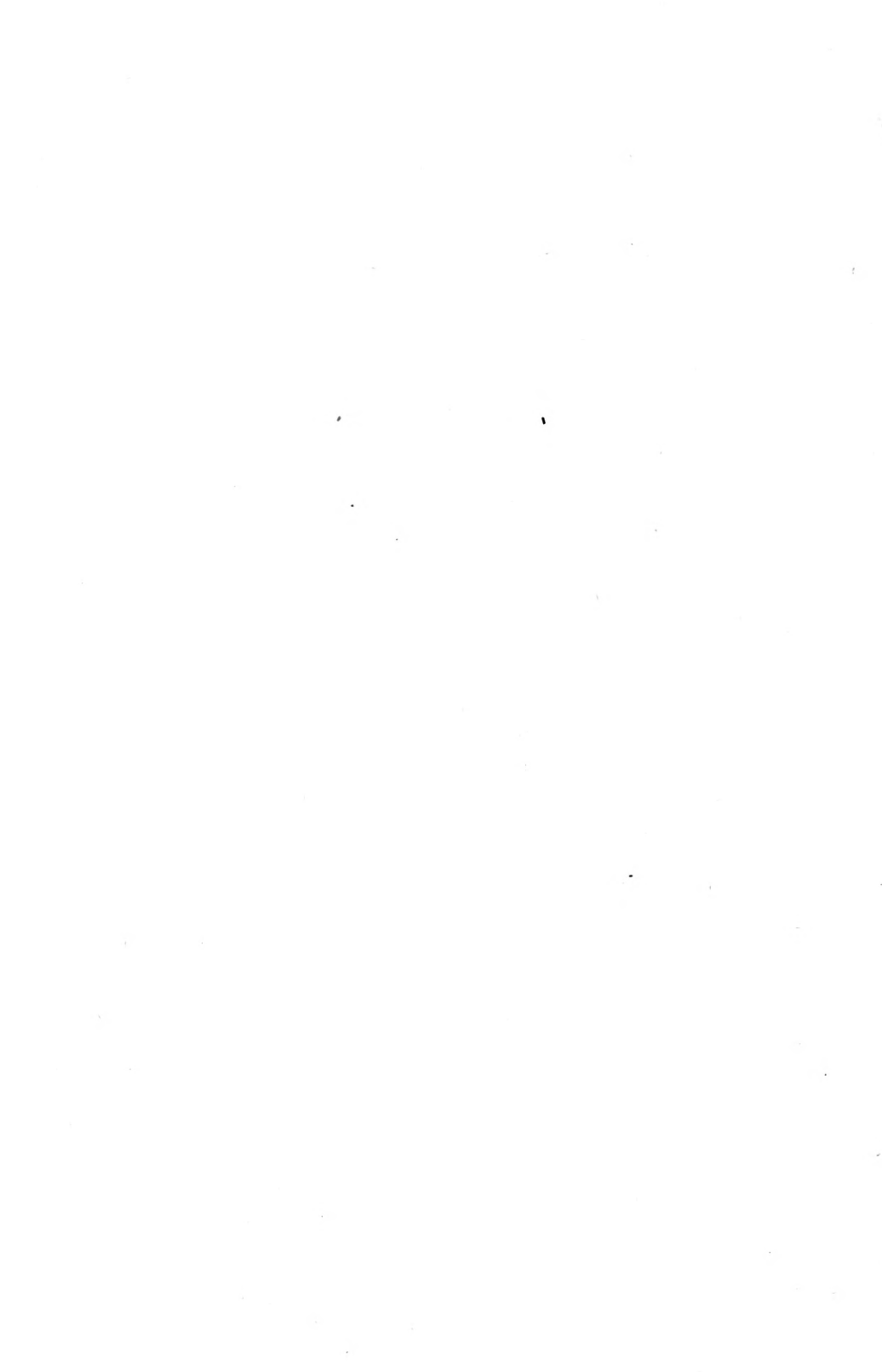






**POEMS**  
**OF**  
**MARIA LOWELL**









THE POEMS OF  
MARIA LOWELL

*CAMBRIDGE*

THE RIVERSIDE PRESS

1907



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## NOTE

MARIA WHITE was born in Watertown, Massachusetts, on the 8th of July, 1821. She was married to James Russell Lowell on the 26th of December, 1844. She died October 27, 1853.

In the months following her death THE POEMS OF MARIA LOWELL were prepared for publication by Mr. Lowell, and they were privately printed at the Riverside Press in 1855. A small edition was distributed among Lowell's friends and well-wishers, and the volume is now a rarity treasured by its few fortunate possessors. It has long deserved reprinting, both for its own sake as a singularly pure and winning expression of the temper of those years and for its interest as a revelation of a flawless marriage of true minds. A few years before his death Lowell entertained the project of reissuing the poems with some additions from manuscript and periodical sources ; but as he died without carrying it out, it has been thought best to republish the little book in its original slenderness and simplicity.



## POEMS



## THE MAIDEN'S HARVEST

THERE goeth, with the early light,  
Across a barren plain,  
One who, with face as morning bright,  
Singeth, "I come again!

"And every grain I scatter free,  
An hundred-fold shall yield,  
Till waveth like a golden sea  
This dark and barren field."

She casteth seed upon the ground  
From out her pure white hand,  
And little winds steal up around  
To bear it through the land.

She strikes her harp, she sings her song;  
She sings so loud and clear,  
"Arise! arise! ye sleeping throng,  
And bud and blossom here!"

When o'er the hills she passed away,  
     The Spring remembered her,  
 And came, with sun and air of May,  
     The barren earth to stir.

And dropping dew the spot did love,  
     And lingered there till noon;  
 And winds and rains moved on above  
     In softly-changing tune.

So, when the Autumn cometh round,  
     The golden heads bend low, —  
 And near and nearer to the ground  
     Their royal beard doth flow.

The poor rejoice; in throngs they come  
     To reap the dropping grain; —  
 Their voices rise in busy hum:  
     “Who, who hath sowed the plain ?

“And who hath wrought such bounteous cheer  
     Where all before was dead ?”  
 They bless the unseen Giver dear  
     Who gave this daily bread.

With harp in hand, a maiden bright  
Passed slowly by the throng,  
With face as fair as sunset light  
The maiden sang her song.

“ In morning-time I sowed this plain,  
Blest may the evening be,  
Which gives back every little grain  
An hundred-fold to me!”

## SONG

Oh bird, thou darrest to the sun  
    When morning beams first spring,  
And I, like thee, would swiftly run,  
    As sweetly would I sing:

Thy burning heart doth draw thee up  
    Unto the source of fire;  
Thou drinkest from its glowing cup,  
    And quenchest thy desire.

Oh dew, thou droppest soft below,  
    And pearlest all the ground,  
Yet when the noontide comes, I know  
    Thou never canst be found;

I would like thine had been my birth,  
    Then I, without a sigh,  
Might sleep my night through on the earth,  
    To waken in the sky.



Oh clouds, ye little tender sheep,  
     Pastured in fields of blue,  
 While moon and stars your fold can keep,  
     And gently shepherd you, —

Let me, too, follow in the train  
     That flocks across the night,  
 Or lingers on the open plain  
     With new-shorn fleeces white.

Oh singing winds, that wander far,  
     Yet always seem at home,  
 And freely play 'twixt star and star,  
     Along the bending dome,

I often listen to your song,  
     Yet never hear you say  
 One word of all the happy worlds  
     That shine so far away.

For they are free, ye all are free,  
     And bud, and dew, and light,  
 Can dart upon the azure sea,  
     And leave me to my night;

Oh would like theirs had been my birth,  
Then I, without a sigh,  
Might sleep this night through on the earth  
To waken in the sky.

## THE ALPINE SHEEP

ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND, AFTER THE LOSS  
OF A CHILD

WHEN on my ear your loss was knelled,  
And tender sympathy upburst,  
A little spring from memory welled,  
Which once had quenched my bitter thirst.

And I was fain to bear to you  
A portion of its mild relief,  
That it might be as healing dew,  
To steal some fever from your grief.

After our child's untroubled breath  
Up to the Father took its way,  
And on our home the shade of Death  
Like a long twilight haunting lay,

And friends came round, with us to weep  
Her little spirit's swift remove,  
The story of the Alpine sheep  
Was told to us by one we love.

They, in the valley's sheltering care,  
    Soon crop the meadow's tender prime,  
And when the sod grows brown and bare,  
    The shepherd strives to make them climb

To airy shelves of pasture green,  
    That hang along the mountain's side,  
Where grass and flowers together lean,  
    And down through mist the sunbeams slide:

But nought can tempt the timid things  
    The steep and rugged path to try,  
Though sweet the shepherd calls and sings,  
    And seared below the pastures lie,

Till in his arms their lambs he takes,  
    Along the dizzy verge to go,  
Then, heedless of the rifts and breaks,  
    They follow on, o'er rock and snow.

And in those pastures, lifted fair,  
    More dewy-soft than lowland mead,  
The shepherd drops his tender care,  
    And sheep and lambs together feed.

This parable, by Nature breathed,  
 Blew on me as the South-wind free  
 O'er frozen brooks, that flow unsheathed  
 From icy thralldom, to the sea.

A blissful vision, through the night,  
 Would all my happy senses sway,  
 Of the good Shepherd on the height,  
 Or climbing up the starry way,

Holding *our* little lamb asleep, —  
 While, like the murmur of the sea,  
 Sounded that voice along the deep,  
 Saying, "Arise and follow me!"

## AFRICA

SHE sat where the level sands  
Sent back the sky's fierce glare;  
She folded her mighty hands,  
And waited with calm despair,  
While the red sun dropped down the streaming air.

Her throne was broad and low,  
Built of cinnamon; —  
Huge ivory, row on row,  
Varying its columns dun,  
Barred with the copper of the setting sun.

Up from the river came  
The low and sullen roar  
Of lions, with eyes of flame,  
That haunted its reedy shore,  
And the neigh of the hippopotamus,  
Trampling the watery floor.

Her great dusk face no light  
From the sunset-glow could take;  
Dark as the primal night  
Ere over the earth God spake  
It seemed for her a dawn could never break.

She opened her massy lips,  
And sighed with a dreary sound,  
As when by the sand's eclipse  
Bewildered men are bound,  
And like a train of mourners  
The columned winds sweep round.

She said: "My torch at fount of day  
I lit, now smouldering in decay;  
Through futures vast I grope my way.

"I was sole Queen the broad earth through:  
My children round my knees upgrew,  
And from my breast sucked Wisdom's dew.

"Day after day to them I hymned;  
Fresh knowledge still my song o'erbrimmed,  
Fresh knowledge, which no time had dimmed.

“I sang of Numbers; soon they knew  
The spell they wrought, and on the blue  
Foretold the stars in order due; —

“Of Music; and they fain would rear  
Something to tell its influence clear;  
Uprose my Memnon, with nice ear,

“To wait upon the morning air,  
Until the sun rose from his lair  
Swifter, at greet of lutions rare.

“I sang of Forces whose great bands  
Could knit together feeble hands  
To uprear Thought's supreme commands;

“Then, like broad tents, beside the Nile  
They pitched the Pyramids' great pile;  
Where light and shade divided smile;

“And on white walls, in stately show,  
Did Painting with fair movement go,  
Leading the long processions slow.



“ All laws that wondrous Nature taught,  
To serve my children's skill I brought,  
And still for fresh devices sought.

“ What need to tell ? they lapsed away,  
Their great light quenched in twilight gray,  
Within their winding tombs they lay ;

“ And centuries went slowly by,  
And looked into my sleepless eye,  
Which only turned to see them die.

“ The winds like mighty spirits came,  
Alive and pure and strong as flame,  
At last to lift me from my shame ;

“ For oft I heard them onward go,  
Felt in the air their great wings row,  
As down they dipped in journeying slow.

“ Their course they steered above my head,  
One strong voice to another said, —  
‘ Why sits she here so drear and dead ?

“ Her kingdom stretches far away;  
Beyond the utmost verge of day,  
Her myriad children dance and play.’

“ Then throbbed my mother’s heart again,  
Then knew my pulses finer pain,  
Which wrought like fire within my brain.

“ I sought my young barbarians, where  
A mellow light broods on the air,  
And heavier blooms swing incense rare.

“ Swart-skinned, crisp-haired, they did not shun  
The burning arrows of the sun;  
Erect as palms stood every one.

“ I said, — These shall live out their day  
In song and dance and endless play;  
The children of the world are they.

“ Nor need they delve with heavy spade;  
Their bread, on emerald dishes laid,  
Sets forth a banquet in each shade.

“Only the thoughtful bees shall store  
Their honey for them evermore;  
They shall not learn such toilsome lore;

“Their finest skill shall be to snare  
The birds that flaunt along the air,  
And deck them in their feathers rare.

“So centuries went on their way,  
And brought fresh generations gay  
On my savannahs green to play.

“There came a change. They took my free,  
My careless ones, and the great sea  
Blew back their endless sighs to me:

“With earthquake shudderings oft the mould  
Would gape; I saw keen spears of gold  
Thrusting red hearts down, not yet cold

“But throbbing wildly; dreadful groans  
Stole upward through Earth’s ribbed stones  
And crept along through all my zones.

“I sought again my desert bare,  
But still they followed on the air,  
And still I hear them everywhere.

“So sit I dreary, desolate,  
Till the slow-moving hand of Fate  
Shall lift me from my sunken state.”

Her great lips closed upon her moan;  
Silently sate she on her throne,  
Rigid and black, as carved in stone.

# JESUS AND THE DOVE

## A CATHOLIC LEGEND

TO A. H. W.

WITH patient hand Jesus in clay once wrought,  
And made a snowy dove that upward flew:  
Dear child, from all things draw some holy thought,  
That like his dove they may fly upward too.

Mary, the mother good and mild,  
Went forth one summer's day,  
That Jesus and his comrades all  
In meadows green might play.

To find the brightest, freshest flowers,  
They search the meadows round,  
They twined them all into a wreath,  
And little Jesus crowned.

Tired of play, they came at last  
And sat at Mary's feet,  
While Jesus asked his mother dear  
A story to repeat.

“And we,” said one, “from out this clay  
Will make some little birds,  
So shall we all sit quietly  
And heed the mother’s words.”

Then Mary, in her gentle voice,  
Told of a little child,  
Who lost her way one dark, dark night  
Upon a dreary wild;

And how an angel came to her,  
And made all bright around,  
And took the trembling little one  
From off the damp, hard ground;

And how he bore her in his arms  
Up to the blue so far,  
And how he laid her fast asleep,  
Down in a silver star.

The children sit at Mary’s feet,  
But not a word they say,  
So busily their fingers work  
To mould the birds of clay.

But now the clay that Jesus held  
And turned unto the light,  
And moulded with a patient touch,  
Changed to a perfect white.

And slowly grew within his hands  
A fair and gentle dove,  
Whose eyes uncloze, whose wings unfold,  
Beneath his look of love.

The children drop their birds of clay,  
And by his side they stand.  
To look upon the wondrous dove,  
He holds within his hand.

And when he bends and softly breathes,  
Wide are the wings outspread,  
And when he bends and breathes again,  
It hovers round his head.

Slowly it rises in the air  
Before their eager eyes,  
And with a white and steady wing,  
Higher and higher flies.

The children all stretch forth their arms,  
As if to draw it down,  
“Dear Jesus made the little dove  
From out the clay so brown.

“Canst thou not live with us below,  
Thou little dove of clay,  
And let us hold thee in our hands,  
And feed thee every day?

“The little dove it hears us not,  
But higher still doth fly;  
It could not live with us below,  
Its home is in the sky.”

Mary, who silently saw all,  
That mother true and mild,  
Folded her hands upon her breast,  
And kneeled before her child.



## THE MORNING-GLORY

WE wreathed about our darling's head the morning-glory  
bright;

Her little face looked out beneath, so full of life and light,  
So lit as with a sunrise, that we could only say  
She is the morning-glory bright, and her poor types are they.

So always from that happy time we called her by that name,  
And very fitting did it seem, for sure as morning came,  
Behind her cradle-bars she'd smile to catch the first faint ray,  
As from the trellis smiles the flower, and opens to the day.

But not so beautiful they rear their airy cups of blue,  
As turned her sweet eyes to the light, brimmed with sleep's  
tender dew;

And not so close their tendrils fine round their supports are  
thrown,

As those dear arms, whose outstretched plea called all hearts  
to her own.

We used to think how she had come, even as comes the flower,  
The last and perfect added gift, to crown Love's morning hour;  
And how in her was imaged forth the love we could not say,  
As on the little dew-drops round shines back the heart of day.

We never could have thought, O God! that she would wither  
up

Almost before the day was done, like the morning-glory's cup;  
We never could have thought that she would bow her noble  
head,

Till she lay stretched before our sight, withered, and cold,  
and dead.

The morning-glory's blossoming will soon be coming round,  
We see their rows of heart-shaped leaves upspringing from the  
ground,

The tender things the winter killed, renew again their birth,  
But the glory of our morning has passed away from earth.

In vain, O Earth! our aching eyes stretch over thy green  
plain,

Too harsh thy dews, too cold thine air, her spirit to detain;  
But in the groves of Paradise, full surely we shall see

Our morning-glory beautiful twine round our dear Lord's  
knee.

## THE SLAVE-MOTHER

HER new-born child she holdeth, but feels within her heart  
It is not hers, but his who can out-bid her in the mart;  
And through the gloomy midnight her prayer goes up on high,  
“God grant my little helpless one in helplessness may die!”

“If she must live to womanhood, oh may she never know,  
Uncheered by mother’s happiness, the mother’s depth of woe!  
And may I lie within my grave before that day I see,  
When she sits, as I am sitting, with a slave-child on her  
knee!”

The little arms steal upward, and then upon her breast  
She feels the brown and velvet hands that never are at rest;  
No sense of joy they waken, but thrills of bitter pain, —  
She thinks of him who counteth o’er the gold those hands  
shall gain.

Then on her face she looketh, but not as mother proud,  
And seeth how her features, as from out a dusky cloud,  
Are tenderly unfolding, far softer than her own,  
And how upon the rounded cheek a fairer light is thrown;

And she trembles in her agony, and on her prophet heart  
There drops a gloomy shadow down, that never can depart, —

She cannot look upon that face, where, in the child's pure bloom,

Is writ with such dread certainty the woman's loathsome doom.

She cannot bear to know her child must be as she hath been,  
Yet she sees but one deliverance from infamy and sin, —  
And so she cries at midnight, with exceeding bitter cry,  
“God grant my little helpless one in helplessness may die!”

## NECKLACES

THAT was a fair one which a Queen  
Pulled the great pearl from, in her spleen,  
And drank its rich corroded sheen;

And dazzling bright was that which met,  
And clasped its fatal diamond net  
About Maria Antoinette;

And cool and fresh the dripping band  
Which poor Undine, with trembling hand,  
Snatched from the wave for Hildebrand;

But better mine, a little thread  
Of jasmine blossoms, tipped with red,  
As if in breaking they had bled.

It was all sweetness, and to one  
Whose life on shore had just begun,  
The very best beneath the sun!

*Malta, August 23, 1851.*

[NOTE. The boys in the streets of Malta string the jasmine blossoms and give or sell them to the passers-by.]

## CADIZ

WE saw fair Cadiz gleam out suddenly,  
White as if builded of the foam of Ocean;  
White as a bride, with orange blossoms free  
Scattered upon her; and it seemed to me  
Her sweet breath met us with the wind's least motion.  
And by her side a cloudy mountain rose,  
Its top enfolding soft a purple tower;  
Such shapes sometimes our new-world sunset shows,  
But thou, old mountain! on thy sides still flower  
The very blooms of poor Zarifa's bower.

And from thy purple turrets leaning low,  
Thy course is seen, oh shining Guadalquiver!  
Rushing towards the sea, its waves to strew  
    With leaves of old Romance,  
    And blend with Ocean's flow  
Fresh sighs for youth and beauty gone forever.

Fade once again on the horizon's rim,  
Take back the vision and the sweet emotion,  
Oh lovely Cadiz! bride so fair and dim!  
Drained is the cup thou filled'st me to the brim,  
And dropped within the bluest wave of Ocean!

*Written at sea, off Cadiz.*

## ROME

THE sun had set, the city gates were passed,  
Up swelled the mighty dome;  
The dream of childhood had come true at last,  
We were in Rome!

The fountains trembled in their light and shade,  
The pale new moon was dropping down the sky,  
The pillars of the stately colonnade  
Seemed to be marching by.

And Rome lay all before us in its glory,  
Its glory and its beautiful decay,  
But, like the student in the oft-read story,  
I could have turned away,

To the still chamber with its half-closed shutter,  
Where the beloved father lay in pain,  
To sit beside him in contentment utter,  
Never to part again.



## THE GRAVE OF KEATS

BUT one rude stone for him whose song  
Revived the Grecian's plastic ease,  
Till men and maidens danced along  
In youth perpetual on his frieze!

Where lies that mould of senses fine  
Men knew as Keats awhile ago,  
We cannot trace a single sign  
Of all that made his joy below.

There are no trees to talk of him  
Who knew their hushes and their swells,  
Where myriad leaves in forest dim  
Build up their cloudy citadels.

No mystic-signaled passion-flowers  
Spread their flat discs, while buds more fair  
Swing like great bells, in frail green towers,  
To toll away the summer air.

O Mother Earth! thy sides he bound  
    With far-off Venus' warmer zone,  
With statelier sons thy landscape crowned,  
    Whose chiming voices matched thine own!

O Mother Earth, what hast thou brought  
    This tender frame that loved thee well?  
Harsh grass and weeds alone are wrought  
    On his low grave's uneven swell.

*Rome, March 20, 1851.*

## AVIGNON

THE July day grew to a close, the fret of travel passed,  
The cool and moonlit court-yard of the inn was gained at last,  
Where oleanders greeted us between their stately ranks,  
As pink and proud as if they grew on native Indian banks:  
Seen from our chamber-window's ledge, they looked more  
    strangely fair,  
Like blossomed baskets, lightly poised upon the summer air.

When came the sultry morning sun, I did not care to go  
On dusty roads, but stayed to see my oleanders glow  
Within their shadowy oasis; — the pilgrimage was long  
To Petrarch's home; hot alien winds dried up his dewy song; —  
Though Laura's cheek, with centuries sweet, still blushes at  
    his call,  
Her blush was not so bright as yours, my oleanders tall!

And fiercer grew the summer day, while in the court below,  
The white-capped peasant-women kept moving to and fro,

With little laughs, and endless talks, whose murmur rose to me  
Like the spring-chats of careless birds from blossomed apple-  
tree;

And, hearing it, I blessed the choice that kept me there that  
day,

With my stately oleanders keeping all the world at bay.

The masonry of Nismes was lost, but still I could not sigh,  
For Roman work looks sad when we have bidden Rome good-  
bye;

Prison and castle of the Pope stood close upon the hill,  
But of castle and of prison my soul had had its fill; —  
I knew that blood-stains, old and dark, clung to the inner wall,  
And blessed the lovely, living bloom of oleanders tall.

Thou pleasant, pleasant court-yard, I make to thee a crown  
Of gems from Murray's casket, then shut the red lid down,  
Contented if I still may keep, beneath a sky of blue,  
The tender treasure of the day when first my spirit knew  
Thy quiet, and thy shadow, and thy bird-like gossip, all  
Inclosed within that sunset wreath of oleanders tall.

## ROUEN, PLACE DE LA PUCELLE

HERE blooms the legend, fed by Time and Chance,  
    Fresh as the morning, though with centuries old,  
The whitest lily on the shield of France,  
    With heart of virgin gold.

Along the square she moved, sweet Joan of Arc,  
    With face more pallid than a daylit star,  
Half-seen, half-doubted, while before her dark  
    Stretched the array of war.

Swift passed the battle-smoke of lying breath  
    From off her path, as if a wind had blown,  
Showing no faithless King, but righteous Death,  
    On the low wooden throne.

He would reward her: she who meekly wore  
    Alike the gilded mail and peasant gown,  
As meekly now received one honor more,  
    The formless, fiery crown.

A white dove trembled up the heated air,  
And in the opening zenith found its goal;  
Soft as a downward feather, dropped a prayer  
For each repentant soul.

## THE SICK-ROOM

A SPIRIT is treading the earth,  
As wind treads the vibrating string;  
I know thy feet so beautiful,  
Thy punctual feet, O Spring!

They slide from far-off mountains,  
As slides the untouched snow;  
They move over deepening meadows,  
As vague cloud-shadows blow.

Thou wilt not enter the chamber,  
The door stands open in vain;  
Thou art pluming the wands of cherry  
To lattice the window pane.

Thou flushest the sunken orchard  
With the lift of thy rosy wing;  
The peach will not part with her sunrise  
Though great noon-bells should ring.

O life, and light, and gladness,  
    Tumultuous everywhere!  
O pain and benumbing sadness,  
    That brood in the heavy air!

Here the fire alone is busy,  
    And wastes, like the fever's heat,  
The wood that enshrined past summers,  
    Past summers as bounteous as fleet.

The beautiful hanging gardens  
    That rocked in the morning wind,  
And sheltered a dream of Faery,  
    And life so timid and kind,

The shady choir of the bobolink,  
    The race-course of squirrels gay, —  
They are changed into trembling smoke-wreaths,  
    And a heap of ashes gray.



## AN OPIUM FANTASY

Soft hangs the opiate in the brain,  
And lulling soothes the edge of pain,  
Till harshest sound, far off or near,  
Sings floating in its mellow sphere.

What wakes me from my heavy dream ?  
Or am I still asleep ?  
Those long and soft vibrations seem  
A slumberous charm to keep.

The graceful play, a moment stopped,  
Distance again unrolls,  
Like silver balls, that, softly dropped,  
Ring into golden bowls.

I question of the poppies red,  
The fairy flaunting band,  
While I a weed, with drooping head,  
Within their phalanx stand.

“Some airy one, with scarlet cap,  
The name unfold to me  
Of this new minstrel, who can lap  
Sleep in his melody?”

Bright grew their scarlet-kerchiefed heads,  
As freshening winds had blown,  
And from their gently swaying beds  
They sang in undertone,

“Oh, he is but a little owl,  
The smallest of his kin,  
Who sits beneath the midnight’s cowl,  
And makes this airy din.”

“Deceitful tongues, of fiery tints,  
Far more than this you know, —  
That he is your enchanted prince,  
Doomed as an owl to go;

“Nor his fond play for years hath stopped,  
But nightly he unrolls  
His silver balls, that, softly dropped,  
Ring into golden bowls.”

## SONNET

THESE rugged wintry days I scarce could bear,  
Did I not know that in the early spring,  
When wild March winds upon their errands sing,  
Thou wouldst return, bursting on this still air,  
Like those same winds, when, startled from their lair,  
They hunt up violets and free swift brooks  
From icy cares, even as thy clear looks  
Bid my heart bloom and sing and break all care:  
When drops with welcome rain the April day,  
My flowers shall find their April in thine eyes;  
But there the rain in dreamy clouds doth stay,  
As loath to fall out of those happy skies;  
And sure, my love, thou art most like to May,  
That comes, with steady sun, when April dies.

## SONNET

IN the deep flushing of the Western sky,  
The new moon stands as she would fain be gone,  
And, dropping earthward, greet Endymion:  
If Death uplift me, even thus should I,  
Companioned by the silver spirits high  
And stationed on the sunset's crimson towers,  
Bend longing over earth's broad stretch of bowers,  
To where my love beneath their shades might lie;  
For I should weary of the endless blue,  
Should weary of my ever-growing light,  
If that one soul, so beautiful and true,  
Were hidden by earth's vapors from my sight,  
Should wane and wane as changeful planets do,  
And move on slowly, wrapt in mine own night.

## SONNET

TO —

I LOVE thee — not because thy love for me,  
Like a great sunrise, did o'ervault my day  
With purple light, and wrought upon my way  
The morning dew in fresh emblazonry;  
Nor that thou seest all I fain would be,  
And thus dost call me by mine angel's name,  
While still my woman's heart beats free of blame  
Beneath the shelter of thy charity.  
Oh, no! for wearily upon my soul  
Would weigh thy golden crown of unbought praise,  
Did I not look beyond the hour's control,  
To where those fruits of perfect virtue raise  
Their bloom, that thou erewhile, with prophet eyes,  
Didst name mine own, in groves of paradise.

## SONNET

I LOVE thee for thyself alone — thyself alone;  
For that great soul, whose breath most full and rare,  
Shall to humanity a message bear,  
Flooding their dreary waste with organ-tone:  
The truth that in thine eyes holds starry throne  
And coins the words that issue from thy lips;  
Heroic courage, that meets no eclipse,  
And humbler virtues on thy pathway strewn; —  
These love I so, that if they swift uprise  
To sure fulfilment in more perfect spheres,  
Still will I listen underneath the skies  
For thy new song, with seldom-dropping tears,  
And midst my daily tasks of love will wait  
The angel Death, guardian of Heaven's gate.

## MEMORIES OF WATERS

(AN UNFINISHED POEM, FOUND AMONG HER  
PAPERS)

OH, hue of the Mediterranean sea,  
From thy sapphire cradle flash back on me!  
Thine is the bluest life that clings  
To the weary earth; bright central springs  
Bubble up with thine azure, and never fail,  
Though the great dome above thee curve cloudy and pale;

When the sunset lingers by Capri's side  
And throws across it a golden fleece,  
Thou swellest along in bluest pride,  
Stretching on, on, on, to beautiful Greece;  
And siren voices drip with the oar;  
“Deeper, bend deeper, to learn our lore,  
The violet's secret grows not on the shore.”

And thou, O Como, O purple one,  
 Did I not watch thee when day was done,  
 With cheek bent sideway and half-closed eyes,  
 That wooed from thy beauty a fresh surprise,  
 As a great broad curtain, dropping down  
 From the sweet horizon's ample crown,

A Tyrian curtain, whose edges were wrought  
 With villas and gardens, and all that thought  
 Can find most lovely in dwellings of men,  
 Deep fringes of vineyards all round thee, and then  
 A dream of great snow-peaks throned over all —  
 Thy purple is worthy those kings so tall.

In the hills of Scotland, you come upon  
 Strange waterfalls, that the light of the sun  
 Glances away from through birches thin;  
 They fall with a slow and hollow din  
 Into dark, still pools where you look down deep  
 To see the black surface; no Lorelei there  
 Sits singing and combing her golden hair;  
 But Bunyan's visions across you creep,  
 With a haunting feeling of one who came,  
 Her heart all trembling and stung with shame,



And, bending down to the pool's black stir,  
 Saw Giant Despair looking up at her,  
 And heard him call from the hollow din  
 Till she, too ready, sank sighing in.

Pour down, O Trenton, thy amber screen  
 That the pool's dim surface no more be seen !  
 Gay reveller, tossing away thy wine,  
 Thy golden sherry, whose hue divine  
 Was never sphered in the clustering vine;  
 'T is Autumn who feeds thee; her banners she flings  
 Across thy full sources, and shakes in thy springs  
 Her whole wealth of colors, leaves orange and red,  
 Green, purple and mottled, an emperor's bed  
 For thy waters to dream on; and when they awake,  
 Into flashes of gold and of amber they break:  
 Oh, type of glad youth, forever be hung  
 With garlands of faces all rosy and young!

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THE  
POEMS  
OF  
MARIA  
LOWELL

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